

**CLAIMS**

What is claimed is:

1. A mainframe connection system usable with multiple software applications, the mainframe connection system operating between a client device, a server, and a mainframe computer and comprising:

5 a set of client tools residing on the client device, the client tools comprising mainframe connection tools including means for creating a reference to a server object on the server, messaging tools for requesting a connection and sending a request string, and access tools for accessing a result stored on the server;

10 a set of server tools residing on the server and comprising interfacing means for utilizing a server object for sending the request string to the mainframe computer and receiving a response from the mainframe computer, and server storage means for storing a result received from the mainframe computer;

15 a set of mainframe tools comprising a main controller for receiving and interpreting the request string and selecting a program for obtaining a result, and result transmission means for transmitting the result to the server for storage by the server storage means.

2. The mainframe connection system of claim 1, wherein the set of client tools, comprises a JAVA class.

20 3. The mainframe connection system of claim 1, wherein the request string comprises an identifier for identifying a result to be obtained by the mainframe computer.

4. The mainframe connection system of claim 3, wherein the identifier identifies one of a plurality of searches for obtaining policy data.

5. The mainframe connection system of claim 1, wherein the set of mainframe tools further comprises a subcontroller for delegating a task assigned by the main controller.

6. The mainframe connection system of claim 1, wherein the result is embedded in a response string.

7. The mainframe connection system of claim 6, wherein a set of characters from the response string comprises a return code and a non-zero value of the return code indicates an error.

8. The mainframe connection system of claim 7, wherein the return code comprises a set of characters including the first four characters of the response string.

9. The mainframe connection system of claim 1, wherein the server storage means stores the result as a local result object.

10. A method for connecting a client device with a mainframe computer while using a software application, the method being usable with multiple software applications and comprising the steps of:

using a client computer to create a reference to a server object on a server;  
implementing a connection-to-mainframe routine on the client device in order to pass a request string to the server object;  
sending the request string from the server to the mainframe;  
receiving and interpreting the request string at the mainframe;  
calling an appropriate mainframe program based on the interpretation;  
obtaining a result using the appropriate mainframe program;  
sending the result to the server;  
storing the result at the server as a local result object; and

retrieving the result from the server object with the client computer.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the step of using a client computer to create a reference to a server object comprises using a JAVA class.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein the step of sending the request string  
5 comprises sending an identifier for identifying a result to be obtained by the mainframe computer.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the identifier identifies one of a plurality of searches for obtaining policy data.

14. The method of claim 10, wherein the step of calling an appropriate  
10 mainframe program comprises sending the request from a main controller to a sub-controller.

15. The method of claim 10, wherein sending the response string comprises sending a set of characters including a return code, wherein a non-zero return code indicates an error.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein ending the response string comprises  
15 sending a set of characters including a return code, wherein a non-zero return code indicates an error.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein sending the set of characters including a return code comprises sending the first four characters as a return code.

20 18. The method of claim 10, further comprising the step of sending an error message from the mainframe computer if the mainframe computer cannot interpret the request or locate an appropriate program.